

Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services	Section: Best Beginnings Quality Child Care Initiatives
CHILD CARE	Subject: Career Development

Supersedes: Child Care 7-2 (1/1/02)

References: 45 CFR Part 98.51 (b) (2) (ii)

**Background
Information**

Montana has developed a comprehensive coordinated career development system for practitioners working in every type of early childhood setting.

The goals of career development are to:

1. Define what practitioners need to know.
2. Develop a formalized multi-leveled education and training system for early childhood.
3. Ensure that training is high quality and meets the needs of practitioners.
4. Provide equal access to education and training through innovative delivery and a coordinated system of planning, promoting and implementing learning opportunities.
5. Promote recognition and increased compensation by formal documentation of practitioners' professional development.
6. Celebrate cultural and developmental diversity of practitioners' children and families.
7. Help parents make informed choices about early care and education options for their children.

The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base defines what practitioners who work with young children and families need to know, and includes content areas that define the knowledge, skills and attributes desirable for early childhood practitioners. At the core of the Knowledge Base are personal characteristics.

Content Areas

- ☐ cultural and developmental diversity
- ☐ health, safety, and nutrition
- ☐ child growth and development
- ☐ environmental design

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- ☐ child guidance
- ☐ family and community partnerships
- ☐ program management
- ☐ curriculum
- ☐ observation and assessment
- ☐ professionalism
- ☐ personal attributes/characteristic

The primary purpose of the Knowledge Base is to provide a basis for self-assessment and reflection and help practitioners determine areas of professional competence and further growth.

These three components of career development are designed to promote quality-training opportunities for early care and education practitioners and establish a pool of trainers statewide:

Trainer Directory

The Trainer Directory identifies individual trainers and instructors who are available to provide workshops, courses and other training for early childhood practitioners in the Knowledge Base content areas. This directory will identify trainers by name, location work and educational background, availability, areas of expertise and professional references.

Training Approval System

The Training Approval System is designed to assure quality by approving non-college credit training available that relates to the Knowledge Base and Career Path. This system will also identify training eligible for continuing education units (CEUs) and Merit Pay. All agencies, organizations, and individuals offering non-credit training for early childhood practitioners must apply for approval to be included on the Training Calendar and for acceptance for Career Path approved training hours.

The Early Childhood Project approves training for early care and education practitioners who are required to complete eight hours of annual training by state child care licensing and additional training hours for the *The Montana Practitioner Registry*. The process is as follows:

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- ☐ Training sponsors apply for training approval via the on-line Training Approval Application or through the mail with the paper application. To assure processing prior to the event, applications must be submitted at least 20 working days prior to the event.
- ☐ Upon approval, the ECP will send the official Sign-In Sheet, Certificate, and Evaluation Form that identifies the event by title, date, Knowledge Base content area, hours and code number. These are emailed CCR & R's and mailed to all other sponsors.
- ☐ Participants must sign-in at the training event with their personal state licensing PS# or social security number.
- ☐ A certificate must be given to each participant who completes the training as hard copy documentation of their participation. Certificates should be kept in their personal professional development file.
- ☐ After the training, the sponsor must check the Sign-In Sheet to make sure all participants completed the training and that the names and numbers are legible before sending it to the ECP for data entry. (Only the 12 Child Care Resource and Referral agencies do their own data entry at the secure website designed for them. Each CCR & R agency has a password to access the site.)
- ☐ All training sponsors are expected to send the Sign-In Sheets to the ECP within 5 working days of the event. (CCR & R agencies will submit participant data to the ECP online within 5 working days.)
- ☐ The data from the official Sign-In Sheets will be entered into their individual training record which may be accessed at www.montana.edu/ecp/personnel. If individuals sign-in with a social security number only and are not on The Practitioner Registry or have not come across from state child care licensing to the ECP database, their training records are being stored and will not be visible on-line yet.
- ☐ State licensing, Early Childhood Services Bureau program monitors, Early Childhood Project staff, directors, and practitioners may all access training records at the above site. If on-line records do not reflect enough training hours that people need for licensing or Practitioner Registry annual renewal, they will have to submit hard copy documentation (copies) of certificates, Individual Request for Training Approval Forms or college transcripts.

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Questions and concerns about training approval and training records may be addressed to the Early Childhood Project at ecp@montana.edu or by calling 1-800-213-6310 or 406-994-4746.

Training Calendar

The Training Calendar lists approved training opportunities statewide and is updated regularly. The calendar may be accessed at the www.montana.edu/ecp web site for the Early Childhood Project. This will help practitioners locate training in the knowledge Base content areas available to meet their professional development needs. The Training Calendar identifies training taking place in the 12 Child Care Resource and Referral districts across the state. Regional and state conference information will be included on the calendar.

Procedures for Person Number (PS#) Cards

Montana Child Care Licensing assigns Person Numbers (PS#s) to all staff in licensed and registered child care facilities when new staff are reported to them. If a staff person is designated by licensing in a role type (works directly with children more than 160 hours per year) that requires the person to complete eight hours of approved training annually, their name, residential mailing address, social security number, and PS# are electronically added from state child care licensing to the Early Childhood Project (ECP) database on a weekly basis.

- ☐ The ECP mails out PS# cards to new staff who have been added to the ECP database every month.
- ☐ Individuals sign-in at approved training events with their PS#. This information is entered into their training record which may be reviewed online at www.montana.edu/ecp/personnel. Events prior to September 1, 2004 will not show up unless the individual was active on The Practitioner Registry and had at least one Registry renewal before that date.
- ☐ If an individual does not have a PS#, they may sign-in with their social security number. Training hours for which individuals sign-in with a

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social security number may not show up in their online training record. These hours are being stored in the ECP database, but may not be visible online yet.

- ☐ State licensors, Early Childhood Services Bureau program managers, ECP staff, directors, and practitioners will use the online site to check training records. If the required hours do not show up, practitioners will need to submit hard copy documentation (certificates, Individual Request for Approval forms, or college transcripts) of the additional hours.

Early Care & Education Career Path

The Early Care and Education Career Path is intended to promote professional development for early care and education practitioners by providing a framework for recording and recognizing experience, training, and educational accomplishments.

It describes nine levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional involvement. The Career Path charts a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education.

As information becomes more available to parents and communities about the strong links between quality early care and education and practitioner training and education, the demand for well-trained child care providers and program staff will grow.

Practitioner Registry

Early Childhood practitioners are called teachers, caregivers, child care providers, educators, trainers, and advocates. Their diversity and that of the families they serve is recognized and supported by the Montana Career Development Advisory Board. Career development applies to all practitioners -- those in entry-level positions without prior training to those with advanced degrees. Early Childhood practitioners work directly or indirectly with young children ages birth to 8 in a variety of settings:

- ☐ family and group child care homes

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- ☐ child care centers
- ☐ Head Start programs
- ☐ preschools
- ☐ public and private schools - pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade
- ☐ higher education - community and tribal colleges and universities
- ☐ community and state agencies serving children and families

The Practitioner Registry is designed to help practitioners accumulate a record of their training, education and work experience and place them on the Career Path. Enrollment on the Practitioner Registry is voluntary and will afford practitioners recognition for their dedication to ongoing professional development. This information may also be helpful to supervisors, employers, and parents. Each practitioner listed on the registry will receive:

- ☐ a certificate that recognizes professional achievements of training, education, experience, and placement on the Career Path.
- ☐ a complete and updated record of early childhood training education, and professional contributions.

Further Information

Further information regarding Career Development may be obtained from:

Montana Early Childhood Project

Montana State University

PO Box 173540

Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

406-994-4746

1-800-213-6310

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